

Dear Senator Elizabeth Stiener and Representative Tawna Sanchez,

My name is Stephen Fowler and I work in Portland, Oregon. I am writing to express my support for continued funding of the Criminal Justice Commission's Restorative Justice Grant Program (RJGP). Our communities are in need, multiple counties but specifically Multnomah and this is exactly the kind of need our community is yearning for.

I care about Oregon continuing to fund and expand the Restorative Justice Grant Program because restorative justice provides victims and survivors with a valuable option for healing and accountability. Oregon needs more approaches to harm that do not involve incarceration or conviction. Restorative justice promotes community, public safety, and healing for survivors of harm. There are strong benefits for everyone involved: the survivor, the person responsible for the harm, and the broader community. Community based alternatives to prosecution are dramatically less expensive than the current system. Restorative justice empowers people to acknowledge, take responsibility for and work towards repairing the harm they caused. This leads to true accountability and reduced recidivism. This allows folx to see themselves and others in a way that humanizes each experience instead of continuing to individualize and create divide.

As a working resident of Multnomah County, it is important to me that restorative justice continues to be practiced in my community because I feel safer knowing that this option is available to survivors and people who commit harm. I also feel the need to say, this opportunity needs the chance to expand past my working community and not only live but thrive in other communities so they too can experience the benefits of restorative Justice.

In conclusion I am proud to work in a state that is a national leader in restorative justice programming. I have been honored to be apart of the work and I believe that it is very important for Oregon to continue funding alternatives to prosecution and incarceration. Funding the Criminal Justice Commission's Restorative Justice Grant Program would demonstrate to me that the legislature is committed to creating more equitable approaches to harm that center the needs of survivors. I strongly believe that the legislature should continue funding the Criminal Justice Commission's Restorative Justice Grant Program.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Stephen J. Fowler